



Illustration by Jennifer Stolzer

Segment 6: Commissioner Visit #1

(Morning - dirt schoolyard; 6 ten-year-olds are playing before class; the 3 girls are downstage, jumping rope; the 3 boys are upstage)

AKEELAH, POCA, SCOUT

(chanting repeatedly while double-dutching)

IN A JUNKYARD IS OUR SCHOOL
TEACHER IS A CRIPPLED FOOL
HATE TO COME HERE EV'RY DAY
WE JUST WANT TO RUN AWAY

IN A JUNKYARD IS OUR SCHOOL...

(Guru rings outside bell with rope from inside; students moan and drag themselves into the schoolhouse)

GURU

(cheerfully)

Good Morning, everybody!

CHILDREN

(unenthusiastically)

Yeah. Whatever.

(Children sit on homemade stools facing teacher. For desks, students sit behind long, narrow tables made of boards and supported by timber posts planted in dirt floor)

GURU

Today we're going to learn something very important!

(As Guru writes on chalkboard with back to students, a fight breaks out between Walter and Scout. The other students get up and prod them on. Suddenly the door opens and the Commissioner walks in)

COMMISSIONER

(shouting angrily)

Stop it! I'll put you all in jail!

(The students fearfully rush back to their stools)

You call this a Garden School? You're no garden! You're a bunch of weeds! Now you listen to your teacher! You learn new things! You make Ko-Lat Village proud of you!

GURU

(always calm and pleasant)

We're sorry, my Commissioner. We're still working on our behavior. We're actually making some progress, even though we're not showing much evidence of it this morning. But thanks for your challenge. We do indeed plan to make Ko-Lat Village proud of us someday, don't we class?

(children do not answer)

We haven't yet figured-out how we're going to do it. But do it we will. And in the end we'll show you that our garden – our garden - it doesn't have weeds.

[music begins]

GURU

(singing)

OUR BEAUTIFUL GARDEN HAS PRICKLES THAT PRICK
HAS THORNS AND BARBS AND STICKERS THAT STICK
WE MAY HAVE SOME PROBLEMS, WE MAY HAVE SOME NEEDS
BUT OUR GARDEN IT DOESN'T HAVE WEEDS, NO,
OUR GARDEN IT DOESN'T HAVE WEEDS.



Score on page 124

OUR PLANTS FULL OF POLLEN ARE MAKING US SNEEZE.
WE'VE THISTLES AND NETTLES UP FRONT.
WE'VE POOR POISON IVY WITH FUNGAL DISEASE
AND PLANTS OTHER GARDENS DON'T WANT.

WE'VE ALL KINDS OF PLANTS WITH ALL KINDS OF LEAVES
WITH ALL KINDS OF FLOWERS AND ALL KINDS OF SEEDS
BUT I AM THE TEACHER AND I HAVE DECREED...
THAT OUR GARDEN IT DOESN'T HAVE WEEDS, NO,
OUR GARDEN IT DOESN'T HAVE WEEDS.

(the students bow their head in shame)

END OF SEGMENT 6